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LB 602

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members. For your own perusal and reference, I handed out a letter that has the names of 112 physicians across Nebraska in support of LB 602. I think 112 physicians across the great state certainly does speak volumes, and I'm not saying simply defer to those individuals because of their training or expertise. They come from all walks of the medical community. But I wanted to reference that letter certainly because it does, in the text of the letter, point out some of the specifics. And I, too, am a little taken aback by an earlier statement that someone would be against anything that might impede research, and that might speak even more so to why we're here today discussing this issue. We, as 49 representatives of the people of the state of Nebraska, we're faced with tough decisions, I agree. The budget happens to be a tougher decision this year than prior years, but it certainly does not hold the exclusive right to debate on the floor of this Legislature. Senator Erdman pointed out a few of the current clinical uses or successes of adult stem cells, and I have no problem with adult stem cell research. In fact, I think it's very appropriate to highlight the successes of medical research. LB 602 does place a limit. It does place a boundary, a parameter, of what's appropriate and what isn't. But some of the current clinical uses of adult stem cells--cancers: lymphomas as a type of cancer, multiple myeloma, leukemias, breast cancer. And these are current uses of adult stem cells: autoimmune diseases, anemias, immunodeficiencies, bone cartilage deformities, corneal scarring, stroke, repairing cardiac tissue after heart attack, Parkinson's, growth of new blood cells, gastrointestinal epithelia, and skin grafts and other skin issues. And those are current, and sometimes I think we fail to see the current successes and what is really pushing us forward because we've been told by a very narrow group, who doesn't want anything, any involvement, from the policymakers of our state, that all of a sudden there are all these answers in embryos that are created by the cloning process. This bill has been criticized by being labeled as a guessing matter, and it's not a guessing matter. I mean, due to the fact that there isn't even any clinical trial that's been completed with therapeutic cloning, I mean, we're always left to guessing, I guess, in terms of what the impact of our decisions might have. But something that was particularly enlightening to me is I regained